

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 172830

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, PK, XF

SUBJECT: ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

REF: (A) COLOMBO 1798, (B) COLOMBO 1999

FOL RPT ISLAMABAD 5634 ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC 02 JUNE

QUOTE

1. AMPLIFYING HIS EARLIER REMARKS ON ISRAELI EXPULSION ISSUE AT ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE (ISLAMABAD 5388) MUNIR AKRAM TOLD POL COUNSELOR PLO-SYRIAN HARDLINE RESOLUTION HAD SUPPORT OF LIBYA AND IRAQ, AND THAT ALGERIA WOULD ALSO HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO GO ALONG WITH IT. HE RECALLED THAT SHARPLY CONTESTED OPEN DEBATE BETWEEN SUPPORTERS OF PLO-SYRIAN DRAFT AND MORE MODERATE EGYPTIAN DRAFT HAD LASTED ONLY ABOUT TEN MINUTES. DURING THIS DEBATE EGYPTIANS HAD CONTENTED THAT PLO-SYRIAN VERSION WOULD SERIOUSLY SET BACK REPORTS TO RESOLVE MIDEAST PROBLEM. DEBATE HAD ENDED WHEN PAKS, WHO FAVORED MILD APPROACH, HAD SUGGESTED THAT SMALL DRAFTING COMMITTEE BE SET UP TO FIND ACCEPTABLE FORMULA. COMPROMISE WAS THEN WORKED OUT BEHIND THE SCENES BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND PLO REPS.

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AKRAM SAID THAT PRIMARY HARD CORE ON EXPULSION ISSUE COMPRISED PLO, SYRIA AND LIBYA. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH IRAQ HAD SUPPORTED HARDLINE RESOLUTION, IT IS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED ABOUT DANGER THAT ISSUE, IF PUSHED IN EXTREME FORM (E.G., DEMAND FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL) AT NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT, COULD HEIGHTEN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ARABS AND OTHER THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY AFRICANS, ALREADY UNHAPPY ABOUT DISAPPOINTINGLY LIMITED ASSISTANCE THEY ARE RECEIVING FROM OPEC COUNTRIES TO COMPENSATE FOR HIGHER OIL PRICES. HE THOUGHT THAT AS AN OPEC MEMBER IRAQ WAS SENSITIVE ABOUT THIS AND SUGGESTED THAT THIS CONSIDERATION MIGHT CURB BAGHDAD'S NATURAL INCLINATION TO PUSH ITS POSITION HARD. EXPLAINING WHY HE HAD SAID THAT ALGERIA WAS ONLY "PREPARED TO GO ALONG" WITH HARDLINE DRAFT, AKRAM TIED GOA ATTITUDE TO NAC. HE SAID ALGERIANS WERE NOT ANXIOUS TO COME TO COLOMBO ALREADY OPENLY COMMITTED TO EXTREME POSITION ON EXPULSION ISSUE AS THIS COULD LIMIT THEIR ROOM FOR MANEUVER. BYROADE END QUOTE.

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